

ULTRA-ORTHODOX POPULATION

(Item by Willis E. Bishop
in Bible Study May 6, 1986)

I ran across an article concerning Jerusalem this last week, and though I do not know any particular verse of Scripture that it fulfills, those of us who are interested in prophecy are always watching Jerusalem and the things that go on there. This has to do with its population. The article states:

The rapidly growing ultra-orthodox population in Jerusalem is now 27 percent of the Jewish population, or some 85,000 persons, according to the Jerusalem Institute for Israel's Studies. The ultra-orthodox have been 22 percent of the population since 1972. The demographic figure of Jerusalem's ultra-orthodox communities reflect even more in the percentage of children in the population. In relatively new neighborhoods, like Ramath and Keriot-mattersdorf, 12 percent of the orthodox families have at least seven children.

You can readily recognize an ultra-orthodox Jew by the long black flowing robes they wear -- they'll have a hat on with a felt or fur rim. North of the Damascus gate and a little to the left, there is a section named Mea-Shearim (meaning a hundred gates), and that was the section in which the ultra-orthodox lived a number of years ago. You could walk through there but you had to mind your "ps" and "qs" that you didn't do something to displease them, and that's not very hard to do (displease them). You dared not touch their rabbis to defile them, and their Sabbaths were very, very strictly kept. They are the ones who cause some problems in the Jerusalem area now because they do not want archaeologists to dig. They fear they are going to disturb old cemeteries, etc. They have spread out now from Mea-shearim into Ramath and Keriot-mattersdorf.

Then I pulled out my calculator and figured 27 percent, or 85,000 persons, which means that Jerusalem itself would have 314,800 inhabitants. The walled city is just about two and a half miles around. This is not talking about those who live in the walled city, but a greater Jerusalem. On one little hill there's a windmill as a memorial to a Jewish man who came a number of years ago and encouraged the Jewish people to live outside the city of Jerusalem. That caught on and now instead of having 30,000 or 40,000 living within the walled city, there is this tremendous number of 314,000 living outside. It's quite a city -- quite a thrill. Why don't you take some time to visit? Fly El Al and you'll find they are extremely meticulous about their security, and I'd sooner walk the streets of Jerusalem in the will of God than I would in Kissimmee outside the will of God.

Comment: If you'll get up a tour we'll all go with you.

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